

## **I'm not Broken** by orphan\_account

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**Summary:**

Nancy Wheeler is not broken. The events that week didn't turn her into a fragile thing. But in this moment, in front of Jonathan, she feels as if she's about to shatter.

## **I'm not Broken**

It's a simple knock at her bedroom window that draws her from her sleepy haze. There's a brief moment where she thought she dreamt the small tapping until it sounded again. Slowly, Nancy turns in bed, expecting to see the dark haired boy with a cocky smile but was met with a shaggy haired boy, holding a shy smile that held more charm than most would expect. She takes her time untangling her small frame from the covers and strolling over to the window.

When she opens it, offering a sad smile to Jonathan, the first things he notices are the dark circles under her eyes and the paleness to her features. "Have you been sleeping?" His words are soft, eyes remaining locked on hers despite the fact they fall to the floor. A delicate hands reaches up to rub the back of her neck, her head bows slightly as she shakes her head.

It's always the same; she'll fall asleep, sink into a false sense of security of utter blackness until the nightmares appear. Images of the monster in the Byer's house. Images of dead Barbara, caught and mangled by the monster.

But the worst nightmare of all was the one that last the longest. In these horrible terrors, she is trapped. Stuck in the land not meant for her. Snow ash falls from the black sky, the world around her is a dark mass of gray black and blue. Ugly vein like slime covering the threes around her and in the distance she can hear the monster. She always starts running. Her legs pump as fast as they can but she doesn't seem to be moving. The noise of the monster gets closer and soon she is screaming. Sometimes it's just a scream of utter fear.

Sometimes she's screaming Jonathan's name.

Nancy steps back, allowing Jonathan room to climb in. It's been almost three weeks since that fateful night and she feels as if she's in an endless cycle.

"Nancy," Jonathan's voice is closer now, and her eyes lift. She's surprised to see him only a few inches from her. There's a moment where she almost falls into him. Where all she wants is for him to

hold her. Return to that feeling she felt when he pulled her from the Upside Down and whispered those three words

( *I've got you* )

The moment passes and she takes a step back to increase the space between them. "Don't look at me like that,"

"Like what?" Sandy eyebrows knit together in confusion.

"Like I'm *broken*." Her words are slowly growing stronger, her expression, although holding the features of several sleepless nights, slowly starts to deepen into a scowl.

"What?"

"Everyone's been doing it. Acting as if I'm this *fragile* little thing that needs to be handled with care," She is aware of her concerning appearance. Nancy knows she looks like hell; but that doesn't mean everyone needs to tiptoe around her. Steve was the worst, touching her ever so gently she felt as if his fingers belonged to a spider crawling on her and not a caring boyfriend. That was the ending line for her telling him they needed to take a break.

She needed time to breath, be alone and not feel as if someone was waiting for her to shatter at their touch.

She never thought the same look would appear on Jonathan's face.

"I -- I don't think your broken, Nancy. Hell, if anyone knows how strong you are it's me," They both know he's right. Despite watching the Wheeler girl from afar, he never expected Nancy to be as tough as she was.

"Than stop looking at me like that!"

Nancy Wheeler wasn't broken; she was just cracked.

After a moment of Jonathan saying nothing, Nancy speaks again in a softer voice. "Why are you here?"

His response is a shrug. He didn't want to say the real answer.

He just wanted to see her.

Now that Will was settled in back home. Now that he was recovering from his injuries and getting his color back; Jonathan's mind drifted to Nancy. At school, she always appeared more pale than he remembered. There were times he wanted to approach her, ask her how she was even offer a reassuring smile -- but Steve was always around and Jonathan felt awkward.

But as Jonathan dropped Will off for his first D&D game since everything, Jonathan looked up at Nancy's window, staring at the illuminated room on the second floor. There was no hesitation as he climbed the room; the only hesitation came when he saw her in bed, snuggled under her comforter.

"I just --- " He finally began, "I didn't want to go home just yet."

It wasn't a lie, but it wasn't the truth either.

Nancy only nods before rounding her bed and resting on her bed where the covers are pulled over. Jonathan waits a beat before he joins her.

No words are exchanged between them. Neither of them mind.

Nancy takes comfort in the strong, safe air Jonathan's presence offers. Her mind returns to the night they shared her bed after encountering the monster for the first time. Although sleep did not grace her that night, she felt safe --- or as safe as she could be knowing that thing was out there.

Nancy also remembers knowing the moment he fell asleep, his breathing evened; she listened for a moment before turning over. There was something peaceful about his features. The normal hardness that always painted them was soft; in those blissful moments of sleep, Jonathan Byers wasn't holding a burden on his shoulders.

Nancy isn't aware when she lowers her head to rest on his shoulder; nor is she aware of the fact Jonathan's breath catches in his throat. "I'm not broken,"

“I know,”

“Then why do I feel like I’m about to shatter,”

The tears come then. Tears she promised would be for herself only. Tears she’d been fighting since she sat back down in her bed. A pale hand reaches up to wipe them away, but her frame doesn’t move. When Nancy’s hand lowers, she finds Jonathan’s without hesitation.

She needs this. The comfort of someone who’s not going to constantly whisper sweet nothings into her ear. Someone whose silence is comforting.

Someone who knows.

Jonathan squeezes the delicate hand in his own lightly before his head rests against hers. There is another beat of silence where he feels the tightness in his stomach. Where he wants to scoop her up into his arms and hold her; protect her from the nightmares she must be having. If they’re anything similar to his own, he understands her lack of sleep.

“You’re not broken, Nance. You’re still standing; and I bet if that son of a bitch came back you’d be grabbing that baseball bat and start swinging.”

This gets a wet laugh from her that brings a smile to Jonathan’s face. He means every word.

“Thank you,” Nancy breaths, her grip on his hand growing tighter.

There is a long stretch of silence. One that wraps the two of them comfortably in it’s embrace like a warm blanket.

Nancy is the first to break it. “Jonathan?”

“Yeah?”

“Will you stay with me tonight?”

There is another squeeze of her hand, “Yes,”

**Author's Note:**

These two have such a powerful relationship it's breathtaking. I hope you enjoyed this little fic. I had to fulfill my Jancy craving.